

Corporation Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12th December 2024
4.00pm – 6.00pm Stratford Upon Avon Campus.

Present	Barbara Hughes – Chair of Corporation Paul Assinder – Chair Designate Christine Abbott Megan Bacalla – FE Student Governor Tasleem Chaudary Sarah Horton-Walsh Rebecca Gater – Principal & CEO Helen Kinghorn Ravi Kumar Tony Lucas – Vice Chair of Corporation Graham McKean Mehreen Mirza Amirun Nehar Sharmin Rima – HE Student Governor Cheryl Pidler Donna Poole – Staff Governor Harrison Thompson
In Attendance	Heather Hunt – Deputy Principal and CFO, Pete Haynes – Vice Principal HR & Student Services, Sam Bromwich – Director of Corporate Governance, Risk & Compliance, Lee Jamieson – Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum, Linda McLaughlin – Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation, Tina Taylor – Senior Governance Officer, John Duffy - Assistant Principal - STEM Faculty (one item only)
Apologies	Susie Ankrett, Dave Nanda, Nancy Buckley - Vice Principal Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships.

1. Welcome and Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that discussions will primarily be around the SAR and QiP. John Duffy Assistant Principal - STEAM Faculty will join the provide an update on quality.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted for Susie Ankrett, Dave Nanda and Nancy Buckley. The Principal and CEO will join the meeting late due to an external commitment.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

4. Membership Update

Barbara Hughes and Tasleem Chaudary Term of Office ends on 31st December 2024.

A review of the Chair Designate role was conducted by the Search and Governance committee and a following a recommendation the Corporation **APPROVED** to appoint Paul Assinder as Chair of Corporation with effect from 1st January 2025.

5. Chair's Action & Use of College Seal and Chair's E-Signature

A copy of the ESFA Subcontract Chair's Action was circulated and **RATIFIED**.

6. Minutes and Actions Log of the Previous Corporation Meeting held on 26th November 2024.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th November 2024 were not available and were deferred to January 2025. **ACTION**

6.1 Matters Arising (verbal)

The previous minutes included an update in relation to the property strategy which will be added to the actions report for the next meeting.

6.2 Actions

The actions report was circulated, and an update was provided.

6.3 Top Key Risks

The Top Key Risks report was received and noted. There were no items to discuss from the last meeting and there were no changes to be advised.

The top key risks were **NOTED**.

7. Committee Minutes

The draft minutes of the Financial Oversight Group (FoG) meeting on 14th November 2024 were shared for information.

The following minutes were not available and were deferred to January **ACTION**:

- A&R Committee 26th November 2024
- Remuneration Committee 4th December 2024

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee emphasised the importance of reviewing objectives and listening to each member of the Executive Management Team (EMT), noting that the process was rewarding. The Chair Designate appreciated hearing from colleagues who had recently undergone role changes and receiving updates on their progress. It was encouraging to hear about their successes and the positive impact they have made.

8. Principal's Introduction & Update Report

The Principal and CEO's report was circulated which provided a start of year update. In the absence of the Principal and CEO, the Deputy Principal and CFO provided an update.

Strategic Ambition 1

Underperforming areas will be discussed under item 10. An update was given on the new funding conditions, requiring learners to complete at least 100 hours in Maths and English for GCSEs, necessitating additional hours to meet these requirements. The E-sports team achieved 2nd place in a UK-wide competition, and an English re-sit student won 1st place in a national Creative Writing Competition. A qualification reform update on T Levels and defunding of certain qualifications will be discussed in the January meeting.

The Chair raised concerns about the impact of English and Maths requirements on recruitment. The Deputy Principal and CFO acknowledged ongoing challenges in staffing and the sector-wide struggle to meet teaching hour requirements.

Additionally, the Chair highlighted the low scores on competition in the student satisfaction survey. The Deputy Principal and CFO assured that the college is addressing this to ensure

equality of opportunity. The Assistant Principal for Quality and Innovation noted that competition had not been measured before, but it will be going forward.

Strategic Ambition 2

An update on the tender for the ESFA will be presented at the January meeting for approval.

ACTION

Strategic Ambition 3

An update was given on the Aspiring Leaders cohort. The Vice Principal for HR & Student Services reported that the 'Rainbow Flag Award' has been renewed. The college, one of the few in the Midlands to receive this award, met with student groups and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Students feel the college is a safe place, and this recognition can be used to promote the college. A detailed report will be provided to governors at the January meeting.

In response to a governor's question, it was confirmed that the Aspiring Leaders program has been running for approximately four years. The Vice Principal for HR & Student Services reported that 40% of participants have received promotions or moved to senior posts, either within the college or externally. Staff feedback has been positive. The Staff Governor shared her positive experience with the course.

A governor inquired about how governors could engage more closely with staff. It was discussed that governors could contribute to the program as board members, like the support previously provided by the Chair. **ACTION**

Strategic Ambition 4 & 5

Planning permission for the heat pump in Stratford-Upon-Avon campus has been issued and will be ready for the spring.

Reputation

The Principal and CEO has been invited to House of Lords for a Winter Parliamentary reception.

9. Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/24 & Quality Improvement Plan (QiP) 2024/25 (including Final Achievement Report)

Self-Assessment (SAR) 2023/24

The Chair requested governors to approve the final SAR 2023/2024. A copy was circulated prior to the meeting for feedback and comments. The received feedback was collated, and the SAR was updated accordingly. The final version was shared at the meeting.

A governor congratulated the Assistant Principal for Quality and Innovation on completing the SAR with the received feedback. The governor suggested aiming for the best averages rather than national averages. The Assistant Principal explained that national averages serve as a benchmark. A discussion followed about the potential negative connotations of benchmarking, and the Staff Governor assured that staff are encouraged to exceed these benchmarks.

The Self-Assessment 2023/24 was **APPROVED**, the Chair and Principal and CEO signatures will be applied. **ACTION**

Quality Improvement Plan (QiP) 2024/25 (including Financial Achievement Report)

The QiP was shared which provided an update on progress against actions identified in the 2023/24 QIP and presented the College QIP for 2024/25 which outlines the key priorities for the College.

Following a governor question, it was confirmed the areas are the management responsibility.

Discussions were held on monitoring personal development, with comments received regarding LM4 and work experience. It was noted that Maths had the greatest impact in the previous year.

A suggestion was made to focus more on Maths separately, rather than combining it with English. The Assistant Principal for Quality and Innovation acknowledged the feedback, which will be updated in the QiP.

ACTION

A governor noted the absence of high grades in the SAR and related actions. The Assistant Principal for Quality and Innovation explained there is a project focused on high grades, which is included in the schools' QiP but not in the main QiP. Governors requested to be informed about this project. The feedback was noted, and it was confirmed that these details will be added separately. **ACTION**

The Chair noted that an update was to be given mid spring. The Assistant Principal for Quality and Innovation will make the necessary amendments for review and approval to help us aspire to outstanding.

The Chair Designate reflected on the recommendation rates for the college, noting that Construction had the lowest score. The Assistant Principal for Quality and Innovation explained the scores are RAG-rated and reviewed at focus groups on each campus with student representatives. Any concerns flagged are addressed in the school's QiP.

With there being no further comments or questions, the report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

10. Quality Update and Presentation

The Assistant Principal for the STEM Faculty was welcomed to the meeting to present.

The Assistant Principal for Quality and Innovation noted that three schools were in intensive care, which are included in the presentation. The remaining areas will be presented at a different meeting by the Vice Principal.

The Presentation Construction Trades (VCO) & Built Environment (CBE) included:

- Action plan overview
- Staffing and Stability progress
- Onboarding and sign-up progress
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment progress
- Progress and Achievement progress
- Attendance and Risk Management progress
- Stakeholder Engagement and Satisfaction progress
- Next steps

A governor inquired whether there has been a reduction in complaints and if the nature of the complaints has changed. The Assistant Principal for the STEM Faculty explained that while the nature of complaints has changed, improvements in communication have been made, particularly regarding recruitment challenges in construction. Most complaints were related to timetable changes, which have now been stabilised.

A governor commented on the significant changes the team has experienced and inquired about the perspective at this interim stage. The Assistant Principal for the STEM Faculty noted that many teams found the recent changes challenging. However, they now value the stability, as reflected in the praise system.

Discussions took place regarding the differences between CBE and VCO seeking clarification about the courses, with in depth discussions taking place around the performance for the programmes. **A governor highlighted** the importance of sustaining progress and ensuring the right people are in place and asked about the strategy to attract better talent. The Assistant Principal for the STEAM Faculty updated on VCOs, noting that teachers struggled to manage both sites. The discussion included whether one or two head roles were needed and emphasised the broader recruitment strategy.

The Chair invited any further comments and requested that questions be directed to the Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance for follow-up. The Chair also encouraged consideration of the areas discussed and potential challenges.

With there being no further comments or questions, the report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

The Assistant Principal for the STEM Faculty left the meeting.

10.1 Quality Report (Term 1)

The Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation presented the new Quality Report for 2024/25 and welcomed feedback. The report provided detailed information for each school.

The following comments were received and noted for **action**:

- The school risk summary is useful to see at the front.
- The report layout and RAG rating was appreciated suggesting the inclusion of numbers for each school.
- Include relevant information in the report to ensure it is aspirational.

A governor inquired about the length of time areas can remain high risk before intervention is required. The Assistant Principal for Quality and Innovation explained that intervention is already in place, but the high-risk status will be maintained until improvements are observed. An update was provided on the risk rating for the foundation – Access to FE.

A governor commented on their learning visit report, noting that Community and English for Speakers and Other Languages (ESOL) still require work to meet students' needs. Governors were advised that Foundation will be presented to the Corporation by the APs as part of the business cycle.

A governor reported feedback from three focus groups highlighting a lack of resources. The Deputy Principal and CFO noted that this feedback will be included in the report and addressed by the Head of School. Any additional issues are covered in the property strategy.

Ravi and Mehreen joined the meeting

With there being no further comments or questions, the report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

10.2 Autumn Student Satisfaction Survey

The Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation presented to Governors the results from the Autumn Teaching and Learning Survey. The following items were shared for information:

- Autumn Survey Comparison
- Site Comparison Report 2024-25
- Survey Results by School
- Teaching and Learning Student Survey Results

A governor suggested considering the provision of a voucher as a thank you for completing the survey.

The report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

10.3 Complaints Report and Complaints Policy

The Assistant Principal Quality and Innovation presented the College's Concerns and Complaints Policy for approval and provided an update on complaints received in 2023/24.

Following a question from the Chair, an explanation was provided on the process for handling complaints once upheld. It was confirmed that a parent portal has been introduced to keep parents informed about college and school activities. The team is also communicating this information to all stakeholders. In response to a question, it was confirmed the team can track the number of parents using the portal.

The Principal and CEO joined the meeting.

There were no changes to the College's Concerns and Complaints Policy, and it was **APPROVED**

11 Bids and Projects update

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum presented an update on the current bids and projects, seek approval for a Higher Education bid and introduce further detail on an emerging project.

Appendix 1 (Bids and Projects over £100k) and Appendix 3 (Feasibility Study – Education Village) were shared for information. Appendix 2 (Equality in Higher Education Innovation Fund) was shared for approval. Discussions focused on targets and building a case for good practice.

The Vice Principal for Quality & Curriculum confirmed the establishment of a Special Interest Group (SiG) linked to the Education Village project to keep governors informed. An update on the feasibility study was shared, and a business case will be submitted to the SiG on 16th December.

Governors were reminded of the upcoming meeting and were encouraged to attend. The Chair noted that the business case will be discussed at the SiG in January but reviewed for information at the SiG meeting on 16th December. The Chair Designate explained that the Managing Director of RMF will attend the SiG to address concerns from governors and the A&R committee. It was emphasised that the corporation should consider the business case from the college's perspective only, not the joint venture. Discussions followed regarding the business case.

In response to a question from the Student Governor FE, it was confirmed that RMF offers both HE and FE courses.

With there being no further comments or questions, governors **APPROVED** the Office for Students (OfS) bid for the Equality in Higher Education Innovation Fund – the total value of the bid is £181k in total to be shared with the noted organisations.

12 Governance

The Annual Report of Remuneration Committee 23/24 was shared for information. The report described how the Committee carried out its duties during 2023/24 to make recommendations to the Corporation on the remuneration, benefits and performance of the principal, senior post holders and the Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance and provides assurance to the Corporation that these duties and responsibilities were discharged effectively.

The report was **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

13 Confidential

No items discussed

14 POLICIES

Discussed under item 10.3

15 Items for Information

The Gifts and Hospitality Report was shared for information and **NOTED** for information, understanding and decision making by governors.

16 Any Other Business - Higher Education (HE) Briefing Verbal Feedback and Next Steps

The Chair noted good attendance at the briefing, with many positive questions and issues raised which emphasised the importance of keeping governors informed. A review of HE has been launched with an external Consultant which will conclude in early February 2025. The findings and proposals from the education team will be presented to governors for review and assurance. The Chair Designate commented that it was a productive discussion. **ACITON**

17 FUTURE DATES

Dates were confirmed as per the agenda.

The meeting concluded at 6pm



Signed:

Dated: 29.01.2025